

REVEILLE !!

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JANUARY 2006

To the Veterans We Serve

As we begin the New Year, the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center is pleased to welcome you to the first edition of our new monthly patient newsletter, **Reveille!** We hope you will find it helpful in learning more about our medical center, including new programs, scheduled events, changes in procedures, new facilities and other bits of information to keep you well informed about JBVAMC and the services we offer.

The newsletter will be distributed in waiting areas and other highly-visible locations within our medical center and four community-based outpatient clinics. To make it even more convenient for our veterans, anyone with an e-mail address can subscribe and receive the newsletter electronically each month. Of course, there is no charge. Just visit the internet web site for the VA Great Lakes Healthcare System at www.visn12.med.va.gov to subscribe.

We truly want to make this **your** newsletter – one that provides important information that will meet our patients' needs. Please feel welcome to make suggestions to

our editorial staff about the articles you want to see. We will include information in each issue on how to contact them.

On behalf of the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you and best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year. I hope it is a wonderful one for all of our veterans.

Sincerely,



Michelle Y. Blakely
Acting Director

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VA Prescription Co-Pays to Increase by \$1

We would like to inform our patients that co-payments for outpatient medicines at VA will rise by \$1 (from \$7 to \$8) for each 30-day supply of prescription drugs, effective January 1, 2006.

This will be the first change in VA prescription drug co-payments in four years. The \$1 increase is required by federal law, which bases VA's co-payments for medications on increases in the Medical Consumer Price Index.

The \$1 increase will not affect Priority Group 1 veterans – those veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a 50 percent or greater disability.

Other veterans with less pronounced service-connected ailments – those classified as Priority Groups 2 through 6 – will see their prescription drug co-pays rise by \$1, but their annual out-of-pocket expenses for VA medicine will remain capped. The new cap will rise to \$960 per year (an increase of \$120).

Veterans who have no injury or illness related to their military service – referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 – will also see their co-payments increase, but there is no cap on annual payments.

Not all prescription drugs are subject to the \$1 increase. Co-payments are not required for outpatient medications for:

- ◆ treatment of a service-connected disability
- ◆ veterans with a service-connected disability of 50 % or more
- ◆ veterans disabled by 50 % or more for unemployability
- ◆ veterans whose annual income does not exceed the amount of VA pensions
- ◆ health problems that may be linked to Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans, to radiation exposure, to undiagnosed illnesses of Persian War veterans, or for new veterans within two years of discharge after serving in a combat theater.

**Questions regarding medication co-payments can be directed to:
Dr. Richard Rooney, Chief, Pharmacy Service, at (312) 569-7103.**

Flu Shots Still Available

It's not too late to receive your flu shot! The flu season lasts through March and the best way to protect yourself and your family is by getting a flu shot every year. And, despite what you may have heard, the chance of having a severe reaction is very low.



JBVAMC is dedicated to preventive care by offering flu vaccine to all eligible veterans. Flu shots are available through our primary care clinics and selected specialty clinics until March 31st. Ask for a flu shot during your next appointment. You can also receive a flu shot in your primary care clinic on a walk-in basis if you do not have any appointments scheduled.

Miriam Diaz / Infection Control Nurse



NEW TOWER UPDATE

Two elevator shafts and two stairwells rise seven floors above the construction site of the Jesse Brown VAMC's new inpatient bed tower, which is expected to open in late 2007. Funded as part of the CARES consolidation plan, the new inpatient care facility will include 200 patient beds, seven operating rooms, a Cystology room and a Chapel. It will connect to the medical center's existing building for convenient access.

Ron Hughes, Chief, Engineering

Phone Numbers for JBVAMC and Clinics:

Jesse Brown VAMC: 312-569-8387
Lakeside Clinic : 312-569-8387
ABJ Crown Point Clinic: 800-644-1243
Chicago Heights Clinic: 708-756-5454
Beverly Clinic: 773-239-7134

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for the next newsletter, please contact our Public Affairs Office @ **312-569-6402.**